

431 child of a mixed Bella Coola and slave marriage. As long as
 567 such an one maintained a position of importance in the com-
 578 munity by the distribution of presents, nothing was said, but
 [554] if he should fail to do so, he could be, and frequently was,
 insulted by having references made to his ancestry. In case
 of dispute or rivalry it was always a temptation to refer to
 such a blot, but if he had atoned for it with presents, references
 were considered improper. Unquestionably, memory of slave
 554 ancestry was forgotten in course of time if the line was influ-
 567 ential, although recollections of the stigma were always car-
 ried for at least two or three generations. At the present time
 the most influential woman in Bella Coola, the one who has
 given most presents, is the granddaughter of a Smith Inlet
 slave. This man had lived in Bella Coola for many years and
 had married another slave, by whom he had a son. The latter
 became the husband of an influential *Stux* woman. When she
 became pregnant, her family secured the liberation of her
 husband, and gave many presents to "wash the child." One
 daughter was born to this couple, the woman just mentioned.
 Her mother's relatives were influential, and her father was
 [555] such an expert canoe-maker that he was able to win an honour-
 able position for his daughter by presents of his handicraft.
 The woman, possessed of considerable ability herself, has been
 able to give many ceremonies and so reach a position of emi-
 nence. No one dares insult her by mentioning her ancestry,
 but everyone knows about it and if her children should fail to
 hold their position, they would be open to insult on this score.
 The woman has validated names and myths derived both from
 her mother and father, without explaining how the Smith Inlet
 traditions came to Bella Coola.

To sum up, it may be said that the position of slaves in
 Bella Coola was not particularly onerous, though it depended
 entirely on the will of their masters. Without status in the
 [182] community, a slave could have been abused by a cruel owner,
 though the public life of the village, where all lived and ate
 together, tended to break down the unsystematically enforced
 differences of rank.

701 than that of anyone else. The Bella Coola do not rationalize
 156 in a scientific manner; if a man holds a belief firmly, he acts
 on it without questioning its logic. Moreover, if a professional
 warrior functions a number of times, this in itself is enough to
 strengthen his conviction that he must act henceforth in the
 same way. It can be said with confidence that the owner of
 [463] a professional prerogative has considerable belief in his own
 powers, that this acts on himself to render him proficient, and
 that the majority of the community have respect for his
 capabilities.

THE PROFESSION OF SINGER

● 555
 424 Singing is one of the professions open to a Bella Coola
 533 either through natural ability or an ancestral prerogative.
 There is a constant need for men able to sing and compose
 [463] songs for every kind of ceremonial, so a young man of talent
 has little difficulty in gaining admittance to the choir. He
 may even win great distinction and become recognized as the
 leading authority on musical matters. None the less, his
 success is considered to be accidental and unsubstantial, lack-
 ing the foundation that comes from the possession of a duly
 validated professional prerogative. A person made a singer
 by the latter means may be entirely unable to compose; in
 this case he is not a member of the choir, although he enjoys
 the social distinction which he has won by distributing goods
 to confirm his professional name. The singer most respected
 is he who combines with natural ability a confirmed preroga-
 tive to give substance and power to his position and composi-
 [553] tions. At the death of such an one, an effort is always made
 428 by the members of his ancestral family to transmit the name
 [578] to a youth who has shown musical promise. Arguments and
 differences of opinion are common among the members of the
 choir and in such cases the self-assurance and influence of a
 man whose position has been made strong by the distribution
 of presents often outweighs that of one who can rely only on
 his actual ability.

FEATURES ASSOCIATED WITH THE POTLATCH 269

THE PROFESSION OF CARPENTER

As with singers, there are many carpenters who ply their trade without the advantage of an ancestral prerogative. They, also, may be expert and receive credit for their skill, but they can never achieve quite the distinction that comes to a man who has been made a carpenter by the distribution of presents. The latter may be so clumsy with tools that no one would ever trust him to make a canoe, or even a mask; but he is, socially, a carpenter, whereas a skilled artisan lacking a prerogative is admired for his ability but has no foundation of social esteem. In transmitting a professional carpenter's name, however, an effort is always made to give it to a youth with a bent in that direction. [553]

The most esteemed carpenters are those who can make canoes, a trade which requires no special prerogative. In the beginning of time, *Yulätimut* was the canoe-maker *par excellence*; he assisted many of the first people, and no one can have a professional prerogative as carpenter unless this supernatural being appears in his ancestral myth. The Bella Coola ascribe the skill of the Bella Bella in carpentry to the fact that *Yulätimut* married a Bella Bella woman in the early period of the world and that many of that tribe are his descendants. In the old days, before the coming of the white men, carpenters were always respected as esteemed members of the community. Chiefs always cared for them, and they received abundant food at every ceremonial. None the less, they were not wealthy, and only in recent years, since the Bella Coola have realized the value put upon good craftsmanship by the white men, has it become customary to give valuable presents to carpenters. Ceremonially, they have considerable influence, since the carpenter who makes a mask usually decides who shall wear it and takes charge of the fitting and adjustment. He is also held responsible for any accident such as its falling when in use or for mechanical defects. [554]

THE BELLA COOLA INDIANS

THE PROFESSION OF HUNTER

224
424
[463] Another profession which is entered by means of an ancestral prerogative is that of hunting. Many Bella Coola have validated their right to this vocation, some by confirming names created by their early ancestors, others by legalizing those brought down from above in the beginning of time. [551] One of the latter is *Lelaimkila*, "The Brusher Off," so-called because the owner is such a successful hunter that he can sweep mountain goats from the mountains as easily as an ordinary person can brush insects from a wall. Unlike the professions of carpenter and singer, it is believed that legalization of a hunter's name always brings success to the holder; perhaps because everyone is more or less successful, it follows [555] that whatever good fortune is achieved by a professional hunter can be attributed to the validation of his prerogative. Others, [556] lacking this assistance, may be proficient, but their success never carries with it the social prestige gained by a man who has distributed goods to substantiate the prerogative.

224
424
[184]
[177] There is a difference of opinion among the Bella Coola as to whether or not certain hunting methods are inheritable prerogatives. With the introduction of rifles, these have long been discontinued, and no definite information was obtained regarding the social position of their users. Several of the older men believed that the contrivances depended upon ancestral prerogatives, whereas others stated that they were merely individual discoveries which could have been, and in many cases were, imitated by anyone. It seems probable that most of the following practices are prerogatives, although it may be that they are no more than special hunting devices suitable only in certain areas and, therefore, limited to the members of the ancestral family owning that particular locality.

223
424 The method about which the most definite information was obtained, was one formerly employed by a certain *Nasypisq* to catch geese at *Tal-is*. According to one elderly Bella Coola,

FEATURES ASSOCIATED WITH THE POTLATCH 273

expenditure though he must forgo the prestige enjoyed by a man who has been able to elevate his professional names in a lavish manner. Selection is a constant factor in the social life of a Bella Coola; the man who uses all his wealth to acquire a firm seat cannot be "strong" in *susook* matters; the man who desires to specialize in *kusiut* affairs cannot afford to display an elaborate totem-pole. Amid these conflicting desires, it often happens that a man somewhat neglects his professional prerogatives, especially those of which the dignity has been slightly lessened through superior skill shown by individuals endowed with no more than native ability. Upstarts of this kind have always infringed upon professional dignity, and the coming of the white man has added a new factor which has almost destroyed vocational prerogatives.

S'alk DANCES

The most important, as well as the most spectacular, dances that occur at potlatches are those given by members of the *susook* society. In addition to these, a feature of many potlatches is the performance of *s'alk* dances.¹ As already mentioned, from 1870 onwards there have been many changes in *susook* ritual; new elements have been acquired by the marriages of Bella Coola to members of the coastal tribes, with the result that details of procedure vary at every ceremony according to the prerogatives of the donor. Since 1910, the influence of white civilization has increased to such an extent that *susook* ceremonials have virtually been abandoned. This took place at a time when the ritual was in transition, a state of affairs which rendered difficult the collection of coherent information. *S'alk* dances are associated with *susook*, but the addition of new features to the latter was accompanied by a decay of the former. Both societies have now almost ceased to exist, but whereas the *susook* organization was abandoned during a period of change and accretion, that

¹ Called *s'elapen* in Klamath.

126 text, although they are obvious on the phonograph records.
 195 In singing, moreover, sounds, especially vowel sounds, are
 * 533 altered to fit the tune, a factor which accounts for further
 discrepancies between record and text. A frequent device is
 reduplication, a word or group of words is repeated in singing
 when not called for in the spoken version. Finally one sound
 occurs in singing which is practically unknown in speaking, a
 velar *j* (recorded as *j*) which gives a whistling effect. Most
 choruses and some whole songs consist of meaningless sounds;
 in such cases the tune alone is important and no attempt was
 made to record the syllables.

It was quite as difficult to obtain interpretations as to
 record texts. Songs which have been handed down for genera-
 tions abound in archaic expressions which are meaningless
 even to the older men: some recently composed are full of
 metaphorical devices to conceal their real significance from the
 uninitiated. The result is consequently a series of words which,
 taken one at a time, convey no meaning. In many cases it was
 impossible to obtain literal translations, even with the willing
 assistance of younger men familiar with English. Every effort
 was made to get the general meaning, and it is felt that this
 object was tolerably achieved, though the transcriptions may
 not be sufficiently accurate for grammatical analysis.

* 533 Singers function at every ceremony; in fact, its success
 depends so largely upon their efforts that they are always
 * 796 important members of the community. Some singers are
 * 575 created by the validation of an ancestral prerogative; others
 by having composed a suitable tune. The young man who has
 [554] done so, calls one of the established musicians aside and hums
 [424] it to him; if the hearer is favourably impressed, he may learn
 [555] and repeat it to his fellows, and if it wins their approval, the
 composer may be asked to join their ranks for the occasion on
 which it is to be used. Thus encouraged, the young man is
 likely to try again, or he may be invited to assist at some
 ceremony for which a large number of singers is required. If
 proficient, he is certain to win recognition in course of time,

SONGS

269

until it is accepted by all that he is one of the men who should be called upon to take part in all rites. If possible, he endeavours to legalize his position by a distribution of presents. Men are always eager to become singers, both for fame and for emoluments.

New songs are required every year for *suaok* and *kusiut* dances, necessitating an almost limitless number of compositions. Singers frequently make use of fragments of old tunes, or snatches from half-forgotten songs, but they are ridiculed as inefficient if the plagiarism be too obvious. Tunes are always prepared in advance; in fact, proficient composers spend much of their time at all seasons of the year in humming over to themselves possible combinations. When word is passed around that a song is required, they meet in some lonely spot and each who has one in readiness hums it, tapping a gentle accompaniment. After considerable discussion, one is selected as being the most suitable and the singers make themselves familiar with it. Words are then put to it, consisting of fragments from the ancestral myth of the person for whom it has been prepared, or from some other theme appropriate to the occasion. Sometimes this is done by the composer of the tune; sometimes by another singer more familiar with the subject. The provision of words is considered less difficult and less important than the composition of a tune; no one knows the source of inspiration for the latter, but the former is said to come from either the heart or the head. All ceremonial songs are divided into three sections; *kolulo-s* or first part, *ai-iko-ti* or second part, and *alax* or third part, separated from one another by the *siutnālos*, wordless chorus. The three parts correspond, approximately, to verses and each contains four, rarely six, subdivisions. In mourning songs there are sometimes as many as six or eight *alax*, and the whole is correspondingly lengthened.

On the night of a ceremony, the singers always take their places beforehand for a final rehearsal. Each brings his own beating-stick, a stout baton about two feet long to pound on the floor in time with his singing. The only other musical

533*
796*
575*
[555]
[424]

[534]